
NORTH CAROLINA'S PHRST LINE REPORT

March 25, 2003



State Office Reports

PHRST words

Welcome to the first edition of PHRST LINE REPORT. As you peruse the information that follows, keep in mind that this is a true news letter. Its purpose is to provide information briefs that are useful and timely. It is designed so that it can be scanned quickly to determine topics of interest and then provide pertinent information in two or three paragraphs. The primary contributors to the newsletter are the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response and the state's seven Public Health Regional Surveillance Teams. This is because the PHRST LINE REPORT is one of our primary communication tools as well as an historical record of our efforts. Topics submitted by counties, partners and stakeholders are also welcome as they pertain to bioterrorism preparedness. Submissions should be e-mailed to our editor at Bill.Furney@ncmail.net.

Because of its very straightforward, concise style, much of the information worthy for inclusion in this newsletter is probably something that you are already creating for other purposes, such as correspondence, reports, announcements, etc. In other words, submissions do not have to be special projects requiring research and creative writing. It may be as simple as adding the editor's name to e-mail correspondence you may be sending or writing a couple of paragraphs. So, please remember – this is your newsletter. Its content will only be as good as the information that is submitted by you. -- *Dr. Jim Kirkpatrick*

Two possible SARS cases demonstrate improved surveillance (3/19)

North Carolina Public Health officials identified two possible cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in the state, a respiratory illness that recently appeared in people living in or traveling to Asia. Specimens have been sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for testing.

In the [news release](#) issued by the DHHS Office of Public Affairs, State Health Director Leah Devlin pointed toward improved disease detection and reporting as being key to the state's quick detection of the new illness. "We are very fortunate that there is very good cooperation between the medical community and public health in this state," Dr. Devlin said. "In addition to caring for their patients, North Carolina physicians recognize the importance of immediately involving the public health network in communicable disease investigations such as this."

Fact sheets and other information about the disease are located at [CDC](#) and [WHO](#).

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Oh, Gear!

Many PHRST members have asked, “When is the RST gear with the regional logos going to arrive?” The short answer is, “We don’t know for sure.” The contract is being processed through the state’s purchasing and contracts system and will take several more weeks. The PHP&R Office is sorry for the delay, but promises that you WILL receive your gear in the near future – “Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but soon, and for the rest of your life.”

CERC Training set for April – a reminder

On Wednesday, April 16 (1 p.m. – 5 p.m.), and Thursday, April 17 (8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.), the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response, with support from North Carolina’s Turning Point, is sponsoring a hands-on training program in Crisis, Emergency and Risk Communication. The training, which has been designed for public health personnel with emergency communication responsibilities, will be held at the Wake County Commons in Raleigh. There is no registration fee for this training and participating counties are encouraged to use their BT training funds to support travel-related expenses. Ms. Barbara Reynolds of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is conducting the training.

To register for this training, please call 919-966-1104 (Office of Continuing Education, NC Institute for Public Health) and ask to register for the following program: Crisis, Emergency and Risk Communication Training. The course number is: HCE#7030103. You may also register on-line at the [School of Public Health](#). Once registered, you will receive an agenda, map to the training site, a list of local motels/hotels, and any additional material necessary for the program.

PHP&R and PHRSTs quarterly meeting – another reminder

State and regional bioterrorism preparedness staff – don’t forget to register for the combined meeting to be held from 11 a.m. April 21 to 5 p.m. April 22 in Greensboro. Meeting participants will plan two multi-county exercises, the first is to take place in July and the second is tentatively scheduled for late summer or early fall. For registration/reservation information, contact Mattie Mayes at 919-715-0847 or Mattie.Mayes@ncmail.net.

Bioterrorism public awareness materials endorsed

The PHP&R Office has reviewed public awareness and educational materials created and published by the [Channing Bete Company](#). (Select “Product Search” at the top-left side of the web page and enter the word “bioterrorism” for the complete list of materials.) In addition to educational pamphlets, they have created an outstanding PowerPoint presentation titled, “[Preparing for the Threat of Bioterrorism](#).” The presentation is formatted in variations of 30, 45, and 60 minutes, comes with a presentation notebook, and can be edited to include additional information. The Division of Public Health has an arrangement with the company that allows public health agencies to purchase materials at a bulk rate. To take advantage of the rate, contact Benjamin Klopp at 888-834-6635.

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Regional Surveillance Teams



Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender

Vaccination clinics

Dr. Tom Morris and Judy Agner facilitated clinics at health departments and hospitals in the region. As of March 25 they have totaled 151 vaccinations.

Training

Industrial Hygienist Allison Stockweather attended the Department of Justice course, *"Preparing for and Responding to Terrorism/ Weapons of Mass Destruction,"* in Onslow County.

Meetings

Allison Stockweather met with George O'Daniel, Onslow County Health Director Jenny Uzzell, Nursing Supervisor; Francine Reeves, Director of Nursing; and Colonel Mark Goodman, Emergency Management Director.



Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Yancey

Across state lines

Acknowledging the need for public health agencies to work together on emergency planning and preparedness, PHRST Six helped facilitate the creation of a regional, multistate planning, coordination and information exchange initiative called the Mountain Empire Public Health Emergency Coordination Council (MEPHECC).

Announced on March 18, the collaborative effort to reduce the threat of bioterrorism includes public health agencies in Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina and Kentucky. Additional stakeholders include Wellmont Health Systems and Eastman Chemical.

"We will have to focus on management of resources and maximizing the capabilities of our communities in an emergency, RST Six Leader Martha Salyers said in the council's news release. "Keeping the public informed and minimizing panic will be essential."

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